DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
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EXCISE

F-15 Enhancement for ~~Saudi Arabia~~

1. Multiple Ejection Racks (MER-200)

The MER-200 is a multiple ejector bomb rack specifically designed for the F-15 to carry up to six conventional weapons on each of the three F-15 air-to-ground stations. The MER-200 enables the F-15 to safely carry and eject up to 18 MK-82 500 lb. bombs (22 with conformal tanks) at speeds up to 700 knots (along with four Sparrow air-to-air missiles (2000 lbs total), four Sidewinder air-to-air missiles (1000 lbs total) and a 600 lb ECM pod).

Cost: about $12 million total if racks are provided for all Saudi F-15s (No 36b notification)

Availability: 30 months

2. Conformal Fuel Pods

CFTs are streamlined fuel tanks which nest along the sides of the F-15 fuselage in the wing root area. The CFTs have a total fuel capacity of approximately 9,750 pounds (1,500 gallons, JP-4) per ship set. The CFTs retain the capability to mount and fire four AIM-7 missiles, similar to the fuselage installation. In addition, the CFTs have been designed with an optional air-to-surface store station on each tank which may be used in lieu of AIM-7 missiles. This gives the aircraft five air-to-surface stations, all capable of various single and multiple store loadings.

Cost: about $800,000 per aircraft set (does not include spares, support, etc). (No 36b notification if nominal 20 sets are purchased. More would exceed $20 million 36b threshhold with all support included)

Availability: Not in US production. About 36-40 months required to gear up and deliver.

3. AIM-9L Sidewinder Air-to-Air Missiles

The AIM-9L is a revolutionary new development in the Sidewinder series. Its salient advnatage over earlier models is its ability to be fired effectively from any angle, including head-on. Earlier Sidewinders were only useful in a "tail-chase" attack. To date we have sold the AIM 9L only to some NATO countries, Australia, Japan and Israel although we have sold earlier versions of the AIM 9 series to Saudi Arabia. There is strong resistance in the Services to supplying this highly advanced technology to other than these countries. We have not agreed to [redacted] request for the AIM 9L.

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Cost: $98,000 per missile. Total for posited 660 missile Saudi sale would be about $85 million shares and support inclusive (Would require 36b notification.)

Availability: About 30 months
(USAF in short almost 1000 9L's it intends to buy).

Note: A total of 842 AIM-9s was included in the original F-15 package. Presumably, some, many or all of these could be converted to the 9L configuration).

4. Jet-engined Aerial Refueler

The Saudis have asked for the KC-135 tanker, but this is now out of production. The KC-10 tanker (a derivative of the civilian DC-10 airliner) is its replacement. The Saudis already have KC-130 tankers for their F-15.

Cost: About $58 million each with an estimated three required.

Availability: 34 months

5. Airborne Warning and Control Aircraft

Either available system (the E-3A "AWACS" or the E-2C Hawkeye) provides a highly complex and sophisticated eye in the sky and would present serious absorbability problems for the Saudis. Salient differences between the two systems include smaller members of tracks and engagements which can be handled by the E-2C (with consequently smaller crew requirements--three operators in the E-2 versus 17 in the E-3) and a lack of target altitude information output from the E-2C radar.

Cost: E-3A--about $174 million each (total program in excess of $2 billion including five aircraft)

E-2C--about $174 million
(total program about $700 million including 11 aircraft)

Availability: E-3A--about five years. E-2C about three years.

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